

JOSEPH JENCKES HOUSE
43 Benefit Street
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND.

HABS NO.RI-12

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
22-

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Rhode Island

Historic American Buildings Survey
Philip D. Creer, District Officer
14 College Street, Providence, R.I.

JOHN JENCKES HOUSE

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22-

Address: 43 Benefit Street, Providence, Providence County
Rhode Island - Plat 9, Lot 174.

An Addendum to
Jenckes House
43 Benefit Street
Providence, Rhode Island
in HABS Catalog (1941)

Present Owner: Kevin Ott, 66 Cooke Street, Providence, Rhode Island

Present Use: The house is presently unoccupied and is being
restored for use as a dwelling.

Brief Statement
of Significance: Built in 1774, this house is one of the few large
gambrel-roofed wooden buildings left in Providence.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1773 Joseph Whipple, yeoman, to John Jenckes, merchant
for £ 270 10s lawful money--"a certain lot of land
of 15 acres neither more or less. Bounded: S by
Charles Keene; E by Ferry Lane (now Hope Street);
W by Benefit Street; N by my other lands." Title
searches in Providence City Hall by the Rhode Island
Title Guarantee. Deed Book 20, page 91, in Providence
City Hall.
- c 1774 Joseph Jencks, House,...John Hutchins Cady, The
Civic and Architectural Development of Providence
1636-1950 (Providence, Rhode Island: The Book
Shop, 1957).
- 1776 Inhabitants of Providence, State Archives, Rhode
Island:
- East Side of River
- John Jencks Household:...White
2 males above 16 years old
7 males under 16 years old
1 female above 16 years old
1 female under 16 years old

Black

3 males above 16 years old
1 male under 16 years old
2 females above 16 years old
1 female under 16 years old

No Indians

- 1790 Will of John Jenckes:--"Further it is my will that in the division of my real estate the Dwelling House where my son Joseph Jenckes now lives together with the lot of land on which the same stands--shall be set off and assigned to my son Joseph Jenckes, his heirs and assigns forever." Title searches in Providence City Hall by the Rhode Island Title Guarantec. Wills Book 7, page 369, in Providence City Hall.
- 1794 Joseph Jenks was in the census of North Providence. He was not in the military census of 1777.
- 1798 Chace, Henry R., Owners and Oocupants of the Lots, Houses and Shops in the Town of Providence, Rhode Island in 1798 Located on Maps of the Highways of that Date (Providence, 1914), shows: Joseph Jenckes House W on Benefit Street; N and S by own land; E by own land. House lot is 41-1/2' x 60' on which is a house 40' x 30' with addition of one room 15' x 10'. House is 2 stories high--all wood, said premises being all in the right of his wife. Value \$1500. ALSO Joseph Jenckes Lot--Pasture and Garden 7-1/4 acres. Bounded: N on Thomas L. Halscy; E on Ferry Lane; W on Mrs. Jenckes; S on David Barnes--Val. \$590. (Taken from U. S. eensus)
- 1825 Joseph Jenckes dies intestate, leaving six children.
- 1826 John, Joseph, and Jerethenil Jenckes sold their shares to Mary S. and Hanna B. (Bowers) Jenckes.. Title searches in Providence City Hall by the Rhode Island Title Guarantee.
- 1835 Edwin and Hannah Bowers Jenckes sell for \$3000 the Estate to Ebenezer Kelly "they being the true, sole and lawful owners of the above bargained premises." Title searches in Providence City Hall by the Rhode Island Title Guarantee. Deed Book 66, page 198 in Providence City Hall.
- 1847 Sophia P. Kelly, widow, and John B. Kelly lived here. Title searches in Providence City Hall by the Rhode Island Title Guarantee.

- 1852 Ebenezer Kelly wills his Homestead Estate to Sophia Kelly his wife "during her widowhood." ~~Title Searches~~ in Providence City Hall by the Rhode Island Title Guarantee. Wills Book 16, page 503, in Providence City Hall.
- 1866 Sophia P. Kelly, widow, and John B. Kelly, lived here. Title searches in Providence City Hall by the Rhode Island Title Guarantee.
- 1913 Property owned by Sarah E. Eustache.
- 1914 Gose Levy, wife of Israel, buys the property.
- 1937 Owned by Samuel Kornstein.
- 1958 Sold to "Burnside Incorporated."
- 1958 Burnside Incorporated sells the property to South County Services.
2. Date of erection: c 1774
3. Notes on alterations and additions: The house is being restored, and the Greek Revival porch shown on the HABS photograph (1958) has been removed.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Cowdey
for the Providence Preservation Society
July 1961

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a large, gambrel roofed, wooden building. It was built about 1774, a time when the fine new houses in the area were being made of brick, and were more apt to have a hip roof.
2. Condition of fabric: Under restoration.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: The house is L-shaped, with a two-and-a-half story, five-bay, main block, and a two story rear wing or ell.
2. Foundations: Random fieldstone.

3. Wall construction: Timber frame with plank walls covered with clapboards with 3"-3-1/2" exposure, beaded corner boards.
4. Chimneys: One large center brick chimney, recently re-capped. Chimney in the ell recently removed.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Frontispiece added during present restoration, copied from HABS drawings of "Shakespeare's Head" (Carter House), 21 Meeting Street, Providence, in HABS Catalog (1941): Doric pilasters, pulvinated frieze, pediment, door not original, five top lights.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Double hung windows with block frames with heavy molded heads. The present twelve light sash are replacements.
6. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Main block, gambrel roof; ell, gable roof; asphalt shingles.
 - b. Cornice and eaves: Boxed eave with molded cornice. Second story window heads are continuous with cornice.
 - c. Dormers: Three gable-roofed dormers with pedimented ends on west front side.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Center chimney, five-room type plan, plus ell. One wall has been removed joining two of the three rooms of the original five-room plan. Second floor plan originally five rooms, now baths in southeast and northeast small rooms. Ell a plain large room open on three sides.
2. Stairways: U-shaped front stair, against center chimney; open string, decorated step ends, molded handrail, main newel twisted, square balusters set diagonally, paneled below outside string with flush and beveled paneling, four-panel door under stair.
3. Flooring: Downstairs - mostly original wide boards.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Original plaster on split lath now replaced with plaster on metal lath.

5. Doorways and doors: Original molded frames; six panel, flush, bevel doors.
6. Trim: Front rooms and hall have molded cornices, window head forms a stepped out portion of the cornice. Molded aprons below the window sills. No chair rails. Molded cornice in back room. Main rooms on second floor have molded trim. Overmantel cupboard in southwest room from a house dating c 1760.
7. Hardware: Many large H-L hinges remain.
8. Lighting: Not installed at the time of inspection.
9. Heating: Central and six fireplaces. Original mantels have bolection moldings around fireplaces, narrow and wide panels above, and frame into the room cornice. The house contains several eighteenth century mantels from demolished houses.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces west on a northeast corner lot. The house is set back on rising ground with two flights of stone steps to the house, five steps in one flight, four in the other.
2. Present fieldstone retaining wall replaces cement wall.

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JOSEPH JENCKES HOUSE
43 Benefit Street,
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

<u>Owner:</u>	Gose Levy Estate and Israel Levy
<u>Date of Erection:</u>	About 1775
<u>Architect:</u>	Unknown
<u>Builder:</u>	Joseph Jenckes
<u>Present Condition:</u>	Very poor
<u>Number of Stories:</u>	2½
<u>Materials of Construction:</u>	Frame structure, clapboarded exterior walls, gambrel roof, center chimney of brick.
<u>Other Existing Records:</u>	Recorder of Deeds Office, Tax Assessors Plat and Records, City Hall, Providence, R. I. Owners and Occupants of Houses and Shops in the Town of Providence, R. I. in 1798 and 1759, by Henry R. Chace, Printed in 1914.
<u>Additional Date:</u>	
<u>Transcript of Records</u> <u>City Hall, Providence, R.I.</u>	Joseph Jenckes House, Plat #9, Lot #174-10148 sq.ft., about 69'-0"X150'-0". 1773 Joseph Whipple, Smithfield, owned the land. February 3, 1773 Joseph Whipple, Smithfield, R.I. to John Jenckes, merchant, Providence, R.I., 15 acres of land on Benefit Street and over the hill (what is now Hope St.) Consideration £270, 10 shillings.

1775	House built
1796	15 acres were divided.
Recorded 1798	D. L. Barnes received 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres, Joseph Jenckes received 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres.
May 2 1809	Deeds signed on Nov. 19, 1795, April 26, 1797 and Aug. 13, 1797, recorded May 2, 1809. The surviv- ing children of John Jenckes div- ided his property into 7 parts. The second part was allotted to Joseph Jenckes, eldest son, which included part of the Whipple Lot of more than 69'-0" on Benefit St. and 200'-0" back from Benefit St. and up the Hill, also two-fifths of the Whipple Lot to Hope St. The house was included on this Lot. Joseph Jenckes' mother, Joanna, to have the "use of the Dwelling House and part of the garden during her life." Joseph Jenckes not to have possession until she died.
November 19, 1825	A 40'-0" street called Jenckes St. deeded to the City of Providence in 1825. This street runs east between the "Joseph Jenckes House" and his sister's Joanna Jenckes Barnes House. Water rights reserved.
June 19, 1826	John Jenckes, brother of Joseph, sold to Joseph Jenckes' daughters, Mary S. Jenckes and Hannah B. Jenckes. Hannah B. Jenckes married Edwin T. Jenckes. Property remained in Jenckes family until 1835.

June 29, 1835

Ebenezer Kelly bought from Hannah Bowen Jenckes and her husband Edwin T. Jenckes, lot of land with all fences, buildings and appurtenances.

1908

The property remained in the Kelly family until 1908 when it was sold to George B. Brooks and Catherine Brooks.

June 17, 1908

George B. Brooks and Catherine Brooks sold to Eustace Rondeau and wife, Sarah E. Rondeau.

July 9, 1914

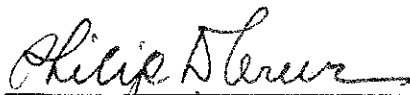
Eustace Rondeau and wife, Sarah E. Rondeau sold to Gose Levy.

June 15, 1920

Gose Levy still owned property.

June 15, 1922 to 1938

Gose Levy Estate.


Philip D. Greer
District Officer for
Rhode Island.

TW 10/17/45